

Summary of Proposed Program Expansion

Program	Items	Amount
Hatchery Trout	Fish food, fish eggs, fuel	\$350,000
Wildlife Habitat	Habitat restoration, fire protection, noxious weed control	\$300,000
	Two volunteer coordinators	\$75,000
Wildlife Management Areas	Deferred maintenance	\$100,000
Pheasant Hunting	Game-farm pheasants, stocking expenses	\$50,000
Family Fishing Areas	New fishing waters	\$350,000
	Engineering & design	\$36,000
Public Access	<i>Access Yes!</i> , other access projects	\$250,000
Kids in the Outdoors	Printing costs, media publicity	\$12,000
Financial System	Feasibility study	\$100,000
Legal Support	Deputy Attorney General	\$135,000
TOTAL		\$1,758,000

Vision:

Guided by a citizen commission, the Idaho Department of Fish and Game shall work with Idaho residents in providing abundant, diverse fish and wildlife and ensuring a rich outdoor heritage for all generations.

GOAL—Sustain Idaho’s fish and wildlife and the habitats upon which they depend

Hatchery Trout



There is unmet demand for fishing in Idaho. Idaho Fish & Game produces millions of fish in fish hatcheries to stock in areas around the state. However, rising costs of fish eggs, fish food, and fuel have made it difficult for hatchery production to keep up with the demand for fishing. The price of fish food alone has increased 31% in the last four years.

Idaho Fish & Game would like to increase production at hatcheries to better meet the existing demand for fishing throughout the state. Also, because Idaho Fish & Game intends to create new family fishing areas in several different communities, hatcheries will need to produce even more catchable-sized trout to stock those new waters.

Idaho Fish & Game would use \$350,000 of the new revenue (each year for three years) to increase fish production and offset the increased costs of trout eggs, fish food, and transporting fish to where they are stocked.

This enhancement would address several objectives from *The Compass, Direction 2007, Direction 2008, 1994 Study of the IDFG*, and the *Director’s Business Plan*, including the following:

- Maintain or improve fish populations to meet the demand for fishing
- Encourage youth to hunt and fish
- Develop five new fishing waters by 2010

Wildlife Habitat



Idaho Fish & Game has been working for many years to improve sagebrush steppe and associated riparian (streamside) habitat in southern Idaho for mule deer, sage grouse, pronghorn antelope, and other wildlife. Sagebrush steppe has changed so much that the wildlife that depend on it are noticeably declining – some even to the point of being considered for listing under the Endangered Species Act (e.g., southern Idaho ground squirrel, sage grouse). More frequent wildfires and noxious weeds are two big reasons sagebrush steppe has become less productive for wildlife.

In 2004, Idaho Fish & Game launched the Mule Deer Initiative, which was aimed at improving mule deer habitat across southern Idaho. Although the initiative has been successful to some degree, there has been neither enough money nor enough people to fully implement the project. A great deal of the accomplishments is because hundreds of volunteers donated thousands of hours collecting seeds and planting shrubs to rehabilitate sagebrush steppe.

Idaho Fish & Game pays a fee to the Idaho Department of Lands to suppress fires on Wildlife Management Areas. These fees are set by legislation, and fees were increased 20% two years ago and are going to increase another 10% next year. The costs to control noxious weeds also are increasing – for chemicals, equipment, and application. Both fire protection and controlling noxious weeds are required by law.

Idaho Fish & Game would allocate \$300,000 of the new revenue (each year for three years) to expand programs that improve sagebrush steppe and associated riparian habitat for wildlife and to cover the anticipated increase in fire protection fees and noxious weed control. Much of the

funding will be dedicated to on-the-ground habitat projects selected by local sportsmen. Idaho Fish & Game also would use \$75,000 of the new revenue (each year for 3 years) to hire two part-time volunteer coordinators to recruit and coordinate the efforts of thousands of volunteers, develop partnerships with sportsmen's groups, coordinate general wildlife education programs, and do on-the-ground habitat work. Volunteer hours also can be used as in-kind match for federal grants, which leverages the new revenue even further.

This enhancement would address several objectives from *The Compass*; *Direction 2006, 2007, and 2008*; *1994 Study of the IDFG*; and the *Director's Business Plan*, including the following:

- Increase the capacity of habitat to support fish and wildlife
- Improving citizen involvement in the decision-making process
- Expand the opportunities for volunteers to help with the resource management
- The Mule Deer Initiative will remain a top priority and will focus on habitat conservation and restoration in southeast Idaho
- Improve mule deer numbers, hunter satisfaction, and protect and improve mule deer habitat

Wildlife Management Areas



Idaho Fish & Game manages thirty-two Wildlife Management Areas (WMA's) around the state. As any landowner, farmer, or homeowner knows, taking care of land and buildings is time-consuming and at times expensive – things just break down. As costs for fuel and materials have increased, the maintenance of pumps, buildings, and fences on several WMA's has been put off so that more urgent things could be taken care of (such as seeding after fires and controlling noxious weeds). Also, most of us know that the worse condition something gets in, the more expensive it becomes to fix it.

Water control structures and fences for grazing management directly influence the habitat quality for wildlife. Most WMA's also have buildings or structures for people to use, such as restrooms, visitor centers, and viewing areas. Also, managers need decent office space, proper equipment, and buildings to safely store equipment.

Idaho Fish & Game would spend about \$100,000 of the new revenue (each year for three years) to fix or upgrade structures and equipment on WMA's. For example, managers would replace fences at Blackfoot River, replace the office and workshop at Centennial Marsh, replace the roof at Red River, upgrade the security fence at Niagara Springs, and renovate the office, restrooms, and visitor center at Fort Boise. Another \$100,000 each year would improve wildlife habitat on WMA's, such as restoring waterfowl habitat in Roswell Marsh at Fort Boise.

This enhancement would address several objectives from *The Compass*, the *1994 Study of the IDFG*, and the *Director's Business Plan*, including the following:

- Increase the capacity of habitat to support fish and wildlife
- Provide equipment and facilities for excellent customer service and management effectiveness
- Ensure long-term conservation of important fish and wildlife habitats and access

GOAL—Meet the demand for fish and wildlife recreation

Pheasant Hunting



There is unmet demand for pheasant hunting. The number of wild pheasants has declined over the last twenty years. To meet the demand for pheasant hunting, Idaho Fish & Game buys game-farm pheasants and stocks them on certain Wildlife Management Areas (WMA's) and other wildlife tracts. This has been very popular with pheasant hunters – about one in five pheasant hunters hunts on WMA's. However, the costs of purchasing game-farm pheasants have increased 25% over the last few years, and as a result fewer pheasants have been stocked on WMA's.

Perhaps more importantly, pheasant hunting is a great way to initiate youth into hunting. Research clearly shows that children are initiated into hunting by hunting small game such as pheasants and rabbits. Opportunities to hunt small game have become challenging in the last two decades because more people now live in urban areas, access to many prime pheasant hunting areas on private lands has been closed, and many areas where small game hunting used to take place have been developed.

Idaho Fish & Game would allocate approximately \$50,000 of the new revenue (each year for three years) to purchase more game-farm pheasants to stock on WMA's and other wildlife tracts. Many of these pheasants would be stocked in areas for kids' and family hunting.

This enhancement would address several objectives from *The Compass*, the 1994 *Study of the IDFG*, and the *Director's Business Plan*, including the following:

- Maintain or improve game populations to meet the demand for hunting
- Maintain a diversity of hunting opportunities
- Encourage youth to hunt and fish
- Increase participation in hunting, fishing, and wildlife-based recreation 5% above current levels by 2011

Family Fishing Areas



There is unmet demand for community fishing opportunities, particularly those geared towards families with young children. Sixty-five percent of Idaho's population is now urban, and nearly two-thirds of Idaho's anglers (adults and children) live in Idaho's six urban areas. *Family Fishing Waters* have both easier access and easier fishing for children and they have proven very popular. For example, an analysis of eleven fishing ponds in the Southwest Region indicated that those are some of the most intensively fished waters in the state, receiving six times the fishing pressure as the urban stretch of the Boise River. And, as gasoline prices increase and the economy wavers, we expect even more anglers will decide to fish closer to home.

Encouraging youngsters to fish has always been important, and Idaho Fish & Game has designated seventy-five areas as *Family Fishing Waters* around the state in the past several years. However, it has become a higher priority in the past two years because of increasing awareness of "nature deficit disorder". The Director has called for five new fishing areas by 2010, but under the current budget Idaho Fish & Game cannot provide the funding "match" needed to use federal aid that is available to construct more family fishing areas in communities. More often

than not, community fisheries are the result of several partners, including cities, local fishing groups, and other agencies.

Idaho Fish & Game would allocate \$350,000 of the new revenue (a one-time payment) to match the available federal aid to build new family fishing areas in communities throughout the state. Another \$36,000 would pay for the engineering and design of these new fishing areas as well as the 325+ boating and fishing access sites around the state

This enhancement would address several objectives from *The Compass, Direction 2007, Direction 2008, 1994 Study of the IDFG*, and the *Director's Business Plan*, including the following:

- Maintain a diversity of fishing opportunities
- Encourage youth to hunt and fish
- Develop and promote new community fishing opportunities in the Southwest Region and in Idaho Falls
- Increase participation in hunting, fishing, and wildlife-based recreation 5% above current levels by FY 2011
- Provide equipment and facilities for excellent customer service and management effectiveness

Public Access



Public access to private lands for hunting has become a significant challenge in the last decade. In 2003, wildlife biologists launched the Access Yes! program that provides incentives for landowners who allow public access. The program has steadily grown since it started – about ninety-five landowners allowed access to almost a half-million acres in 2008. This successful program is limited entirely by funding – there are many more landowners who want to participate than are selected each year, but we don't have the money!

On a similar note, budgets for maintaining Wildlife Management Areas have remained the same even though new parcels have been added. As a result, initiatives to enhance access and hunting opportunities on the new

parcels have taken a back seat to maintaining existing areas.

Idaho Fish & Game would allocate about \$150,000 of the new revenue (each year for three years) to both *Access Yes!* and to projects on new parcels that will improve sportsmen's access. For example, managers would develop an access site on the new Redbird Canyon Segment on Craig Mountain Wildlife Management Area. Sportsmen will help select the access projects to be done on public and private lands.

This enhancement would address several objectives from *The Compass, Direction 2006, Direction 2007, Direction 2008, 1994 Study of the IDFG*, and the *Director's Business Plan*, including the following:

- Increase the variety and distribution of access to private land for fish and wildlife recreation
- Provide hunting and angling access on 1.5 million acres of private and public land through *Access Yes!* by 2009
- Expand funding options for *Access Yes!*
- Create and use ad-hoc stakeholder advisory groups to address public service issues

GOAL—Improve public understanding of and involvement in fish and wildlife management

Kids in the Outdoors



In his 2005 book, *Last Child in the Woods: Saving our Children from Nature Deficit Disorder*, author Richard Louv made a strong case that today's children are suffering physically, mentally, and emotionally from a disconnect with the natural world. Children now spend an average of 45 hours per week with electronic media. In contrast, the average time spent by an American child in unstructured outdoor play is 30 minutes per week. The results of this disconnect are being linked to the increasing rates of childhood obesity, diabetes, depression, attention-deficit disorders, and other developmental problems.

Idaho Fish & Game is part of the Idaho Children & Nature Network (established in 2007), which includes a wide variety of city, state, and federal agency and private sector members working to reconnect Idaho's children with the outdoors. Governor Otter is fully behind this effort and also is a member of the Network. Getting kids outside has become a high priority for Idaho Fish & Game in the last two years.

Although some money has been diverted from other education projects, there has not been enough to fund this new priority.

Idaho Fish & Game conservation educators would use \$12,000 of the new revenue (each year for three years) to raise awareness about nature deficit disorder and to help parents and their kids reconnect with nature. Specific items include printing an issue of *Wildlife Express* devoted to things kids can do outdoors, printing an outdoor activity calendar, creating various projects to get kids interested in outdoor activities, and for increasing media publicity.

This enhancement would address several objectives from *The Compass, Direction 2007, Direction 2008, 1994 Study of the IDFG*, and the *Director's Business Plan*, including the following:

- Increase public knowledge and understanding of Idaho's fish and wildlife
- Emphasize programs and events that get children interested in fish, wildlife, fishing, and hunting
- Increase participation in hunting, angling, and wildlife-based recreation 5% above current levels by 2011

GOAL—Enhance the capability of the Department to manage fish and wildlife and serve the public

Financial System



Idaho Fish & Game's financial system is old, cumbersome, and cannot be easily upgraded to meet the agency's needs for data management and reporting. The current budget system is not integrated with the state government's financial system (called STARS), and financial specialists spend too much time correcting errors rather than having "electronic edits" to prevent errors in the first place.

In addition, many Idaho Fish & Game managers work under 400 or so different contracts, each with its own set of restrictions. Financial specialists have examined existing STARS capabilities and they believe that STARS does not provide enough flexibility to efficiently keep track of all those contracts or for producing useful reports. Therefore, Idaho Fish & Game needs its own financial system and one that is compatible with STARS.

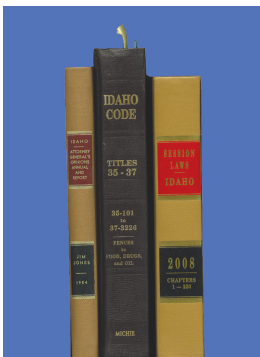
Finally, the current STARS system does not have the flexibility to align past spending or future budgeting with Idaho Fish & Game's strategic priorities. That is, the way STARS keeps track of money is different than the way managers keep track of Fish & Game's goals, objectives, and accomplishments. As a result, managers and supervisors spend a great deal of time and effort tracking spending and performing budget analyses. A new financial system would reduce much of the hassle and allow biologists to more easily direct funding to high priority projects.

Although an entirely new financial system would be very expensive, the short-term plan is for financial specialists to use about \$100,000 of the new revenue to conduct a study of alternatives with the State Controller's Office and to produce a plan to address the various problems.

This enhancement would address several objectives from *The Compass*, *Direction 2006*, *the 1994 Study of the IDFG*, and *the Director's Business Plan*, including the following:

- Improve information management and business systems
- Align existing plans with *The Compass*, develop performance measures, and synchronize the work planning and budget development processes
- Improve business practices to enhance effectiveness and accountability
- Improve planning and budgeting systems

Legal Support



Previously, there was only one "deputy attorney general" assigned to Idaho Fish & Game, and the additional workload was assigned across several other attorneys in the Attorney General's Office. Most state agencies similar in size and workload to Fish & Game have at least two attorneys assigned to them. There are many state and federal laws for which Fish & Game needs legal support in order to be responsive and compliant.

Recently, the Idaho Fish & Game Commission requested – and the Governor approved – a second deputy attorney general. This should greatly improve the focus and coordination of Idaho Fish & Game's legal issues because issues that have been assigned across several

attorneys in the Attorney General's Office can be consolidated and addressed side-by-side with managers and Fish & Game Commissioners.

The Director would use \$135,000 of the new revenue each year for the next three years to provide salary, benefits, and an operating budget for a second deputy attorney general.

This enhancement would address several objectives from *The Compass* and *1994 Study of the IDFG* including the following:

- Improve funding to meet legal mandates and public expectations
- Securing legal review for compliance with various laws
- Increase priority for protecting water and interacting with other relevant agencies